



Subdivision Staging Policy: School Capacity in the Northwest School Cluster

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description

Memo summarizing the current and expected School Facility Payment/Moratorium status for the Northwest School Cluster.

The purpose of this memo is to inform the Planning Board and community of a potential change in the school facility payment and moratorium status of the Northwest School Cluster. Since November 2007, the Subdivision Staging Policy has required a queue of completed preliminary plan applications for residential development (yet to receive Board approval). Potential student yields for each project are calculated using the number of proposed dwelling units in each application. The potential student yields are subtracted from capacity figures adopted as part of the annual school test.

The purpose of the queue is to monitor the impact of potential development on school capacity on a regular basis rather than once a year as part of the annual school test.

The Northwest cluster currently requires a School Facility Payment at the elementary and high school level as a condition of approval for residential development. There are four projects currently in the queue for the Northwest cluster. The first project in the queue is for one single family detached house. Approval of this plan would not alter the APFO conditions of the cluster. However, the remaining three projects individually propose enough development that at the middle school level a School Facility Payment would now be required as a condition of approval. In addition, there is insufficient capacity at the elementary school level to approve all of the development currently in the queue.

Once the capacity ceiling at the elementary level is reached, no other preliminary plan would be eligible for approval and the Northwest cluster would enter a moratorium on residential development. The cluster would remain in moratorium until the Planning Board finds sufficient capacity to remove the moratorium status. The Planning Board’s next review of the annual school test is July 1, 2012.

Below are two tables, one representing the projected enrollment and capacity figures for the Northwest cluster and another listing completed preliminary plan applications for the Northwest Cluster awaiting Planning Board approval.

Northwest School Cluster		Elementary Level	Middle School Level	High School Level
Projected Enrollment		4,356	3,518	2,333
105% Capacity Ceiling		3,866	3,521	2,258
120% Capacity Ceiling		4,418	4,024	2,581
Capacity Remaining Prior to School Facility Payment		-490	3	-75
Capacity remaining Prior to Moratorium		62	506	248

Northwest School Cluster – Completed Preliminary Plan Applications awaiting Approval				
Project Plan Number	Project Name	Date Application Completed	Types of Units	Number of Units
120100300	Phillips Farm	May 17, 2010	SF, TW	28, 24
120110090	Martens	June 21, 2011	TW, GR	169, 286
120110440	Germantown Park	July 7, 2011	TW	105

Since 2010 the County Council has approved six CIP amendments, Program Dedicated Funds (PDF's), which provided additional capital funding for school clusters facing a moratorium. The first three PDF's followed the 2009 Growth Policy resolution which allowed the Planning Board a one-time mid-cycle school adequacy review. The other three PDF's were adopted this past spring, a month prior to the annual school test. If the County Council were to amend the current PDF for the Northwest Cluster, the Council would also need to amend the Subdivision Staging Policy to allow the Planning Board another mid-cycle review.

In summary, residential development in the Northwest cluster is currently required to make a school facility payment at the elementary and high school level. The next project generating three or more middle school students seeking Planning Board approval, will require a school facility payment at all three school levels. In addition, any project requesting approval for units generating 62 or more elementary students will be required to cap the units requested such that no more than the available elementary level capacity is generated, after which, the cluster will enter moratorium.